

The Journal

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Association

The editor writes.....

Paper accumulates. After every recital, wedding or funeral, concert play or opera, we bring the accompanying programme, order of service and other literature home. Years later it is interesting to browse through the heap and be reminded of the events, perhaps wonder why we bothered to keep the document or, at worst, fail to remember being there at all.

In such an exercise lately there emerged a programme for a recital given in St Giles Church by Nicholas Choveaux and Barbara Lind, granddaughter of Jenny Lind, at which we were certainly not present as it occurred in 1949 when I was 13 and living in Thornaby on Tees, and some 20 years before I would take up the post of organist in that very church and Isabel wasn't even in double figures.

Where this programme came from I have no idea but it is interesting in that it was the first public presentation in England of the new Constant Martin (to be pronounced with a French accent) organ which had been invented by a French engineer – the first pipe-less and windless organ. The programme note claims that it is very difficult to distinguish such an organ from its predecessor, the pipe organ.

The instrument in St Giles was made and voiced in France and therefore sounded more like a French organ than an English one.

The Miller Organ Company had acquired the rights to build these organs for Great Britain and The Empire and this work had already commenced in Norwich. How long this device was in St Giles I do not know as when I went there in 1969

there was no sign of it (mercifully!). But if anyone knows of this instrument or the instruments made by the Miller Company it might make interesting reading – (or not, as the case may be).

The programme included organ works by Bach, Franck, Whitlock and Boëllmann (*Suite Gothique*) and Choveaux himself. Deciding to find out more about M Choveaux, (and I once owned the score of a set of variations by him on St Magnus which were of dubious merit), I entered his name in a Google search and what should come up but the Association's web site! The recital had obviously been arranged by the then Guild and was regarded at the time as a significant event. Perhaps one of the members wrote the programme note, someone perhaps who was hard of hearing given the observation at the end of the third paragraph! Anyone you know?

Still in reminiscing mood I found myself looking through an album of photographs taken when Isabel and I made our round-the-world trip ten years ago. I lingered a little as I stared at the picture of myself at the console of Sydney Town Hall with my hand outstretched to draw the legendary 64' Contra Trombone Wood.

More memories. At the recent recital in Norwich Cathedral by former Organ Scholar Ben Giddens I heard in performance for the second time Leighton's *Prelude, Scherzo & Passacaglia* which I heard for the first time in Norwich Cathedral in the late '60s played by Herrick Bunney. Spookily there was also present in the cathedral on that occasion a young June Nixon and neither of us knew that the other existed. I'll probably have the programme for that somewhere.....

Organ News

Geoff Sankey

W & A Boggis have completed their work on the Redgrave Casson organ, which was celebrated with a lively opening recital by David Ivory. A local carpenter is going to build side panels for the elevated part of the case.

They are now busy with autumn tunings, work outside the county, and a project which will be revealed in due course. Watch this space!

Richard Bower has been back to Wetheral (near Carlisle) to give his handsome first-born (now over 25 years old) some minor adjustments and re-voicing.

In Norfolk, they have restored the little single manual organ in St Botolph's at Trunch. Richard has explained enthusiastically that "*Trunch was the home of Williamson & Hyatt and they installed this beautiful 1808 William Gray Chamber organ there in 1951, fabulously restoring it in the way things were done in 1951 – meaning that it gained a 30 note pedalboard, a new CC compass keyboard console and tracker action, whilst preserving the case and pipework, albeit remodelled into the standard 8,8,4,2. + 16ft pedal spec. Mr Hyatt excelled himself by making the voicing beautiful, and with the 1808 stopped diapason "chiffing" its head off and delighting the young organists of the 1960s. Our restoration (planned in 2008) celebrates both dates, 200 years + of Gray, and 50 Years + of W & H, and so we kept all the W & H features but tempered the chiff just a little, and that mainly by reducing the pallet sizes to reduce the excessive former pluck, making it more controllable. The*

casework has all been re-polished, replacing the glossy lacquer of the console hated by the Georgian society with traditional french polish, and the W & H pneumatic pedal action has been replaced with tracker." Richard tells me that the result is very attractive.

For the ladies

Woman's Weekly has just issued a copy of the first ever edition dating from 1911. It is fascinating to see what preoccupied women 100 years ago.

However, there is one article which caught my eye entitled *How to Sing and Play* by A London Organist - (I wonder who that was!).

There is a footnote which reads 'Please write to Music Column, Woman's Weekly Office (address given), if you want advice or information on any musical subject.



Liszt at Brooke

Think Liszt and think piano virtuoso and composer way ahead of his time. The glitzy Liszt pieces tend to overshadow many other works by this innovative composer and Brent Palmer gave us the opportunity to hear some of Liszt's output rarely heard.



We are all aware of Liszt as transcriber but his transcriptions for the piano overshadow transcriptions he made for the organ and we heard three such transcriptions including one, for me quite surprising, of a piano prelude by Chopin which was played at Chopin's funeral – quite a revelation.

How often do we consider Liszt writing for voices? Hardly ever. But three sections from the unfinished oratorio *St Stanislaus* demonstrated that Liszt was a master and creative genius in this less flamboyant form.

Liszt's organ works – yes we all know about BACH and Ad Nos (which we listened to), but we also heard the *Missa Pro Organo* – eight short meditations which, amongst other things, seem very manageable for those non-virtuosi among us.

In another unfamiliar mode we heard sections of *Via Crucis* in the version for piano and voices.

Brent had obviously researched his material thoroughly and selected music by

this great composer which we probably would never have encountered.

The afternoon ended with another rare opportunity, that of hearing an organ and an organist no longer with us, Jeanne Demessieux on the organ of the Victoria Hall, Geneva.

It was an afternoon which required a fair bit of concentration but which had many rewards and moments of enlightenment and bravely presented by Brent who, at the time, was not in the best of health. Many thanks to him.

Deputy available

Member Graham Dickerson is available to deputise throughout the County. Graham was Organist and Choirmaster at Dereham Parish Church for over 20 years from 1975 and handed over the keys because work commitments meant he could not fulfil the demands of such a large Parish. Graham trained at Norwich Cathedral with the late Brian Runnett and as a diocesan organ scholar with the late Kenneth Ryder. His first post aged 15 was at St Mary Magdalene in Norwich and after several years there he moved to Shotesham and then to Dereham. Graham lives in Norwich and is now semi retired. He works in Kings Lynn and as well as occasional deputy roles keeps busy playing the organ at masonic ceremonies. Graham can be contacted by email grdick@hotmail.co.uk or by phone on 01603 484352.

A message from the Treasurer, Sylvia Martin

I have been asked to highlight for you a few details from the Association's current financial statement in order to show you why, after nine years, subscriptions need to increase in 2012.

The finances tick along in the background for most members I am sure and you don't really need to know what costs the Association incurs in order to keep it exciting, vibrant and attractive. For those that do wish to know then the year-end Annual Statement reveals all.

Our receipts come almost totally from Membership subscriptions and the gift-aid tax refund. From these receipts we have to pay a proportion per person to the Incorporated Association of Organists of which we are required, as an organists association, to be a member.

We also give a donation to every church we visit, pay fees to visiting speakers and performers, sponsor a young organist recital, subsidize elements of larger events such as the AGM, reimburse admin costs (most of these are borne by committee members personally), pay an audit fee to ensure that the financial records are being kept correctly and are true, and pay for the printing and postage of the superb Journal which none of us would be without.

The committee takes care to ensure that the membership gets the best from the Association without exceeding the funds available. However, this year, as well as the regular costs mentioned previously, funds have been used to set up a website and produce a leaflet that aims to promote the Association and raise its profile. This is the sort of extraordinary cost that rarely arises but does stretch the budget.

Most clubs and associations review

membership fees annually but the last time NOA subscriptions were increased was January 2003. We plan to review them more regularly in the future in order to prevent what may seem to some an unreasonable increase.

I hope this has given you a little insight into the reasoning behind the need for the change in next year's subscriptions.



Do you get a complimentary copy of The Journal?

Reviewing our procedures recently we realised that about 20 Journals go out to people who are not members of the Association. If you are one of these would you kindly confirm that you wish to continue receiving them. With the cost of postage being what it is we do not wish to send Journals anywhere where they go straight into the waste paper basket.

If you value the Journal then it is worth an email to let us know and we'll be very happy to keep sending you one.

From Harris to Hedgeland

Pauline Stratton

Reproduced with permission from the EDP.

On 5th August 1865 it was reported in the Norfolk Chronicle, that the Renatus Harris organ in St Peter's Mancroft church, Norwich would be restored by Mr Hedgeland and that the gentleman's specifications had been accepted.

The next week the newspaper published the following letter;
Sir - I addressed a letter to you a few weeks since upon the subject of the proposed plan of removing the organ in St Peter's church from the position which it has occupied for 150 years past; I complained of the intention of cramming it into the narrow arch of the transept, where there is not sufficient space for it without destroying the handsome proportions of the case, and injuring the tone of the instrument. Since I wrote the letter referred to, I have conversed with several persons upon the subject - clergymen, laymen, and musical men - whose opinions upon it entirely coincide with my own, and I must add, that some parties whose names appear upon the subscription list, did not intend or wish to remove the organ, but only to improve it! Now, as I feel a deep regard for the organ, and for the church in which it is placed, having been well acquainted with both for more than half a century, I venture to make another effort, through your valuable columns, to prevent this uncalled - for and useless change in this beautiful building; the space to be gained by it is not only useless, but in the winter months (this church not being warmed) the cold

air from the tower and the door next the Swan gateway (notoriously a cold and windy location), will make the congregation think themselves in Canada. In a paragraph in your last week's journal, it is stated that the subscriptions for the restoration for the organ have enabled the committee to enter into arrangements with Mr Hedgeland, and it stated that when reconstructed it will contain a larger variety of stops than any other organ in the city. Now, I confess from this paragraph I entertain hopes that the improvement alone of the instrument is referred to, and not its removal, because, if an addition is to be made to the number of stops, I do not see how the organ can be accommodated in a smaller space than it now occupies; and as the instrument is to be brought nearer the ground with increased power, it will be a source of complaint with a portion of the congregation whose sittings are in its vicinity. I am very glad to observe that the committee has fixed upon so experienced and excellent an organ builder as Mr Hedgeland, who will in an honourable manner complete all he undertakes, and I would as cheerfully add my name to the subscription list to improve the organ, as I now earnestly protest against the removal of it.

I remain, dear sir, yours truly. Henry Browne.

The complaints must have continued as on 13th January 1866 a letter from the churchwardens was printed in the Norwich Mercury;

Sir - As you seem to be under the impression that we have removed the organ and gallery from the west end of St Peter Mancroft church without authority, and have conveyed that impression to your readers, we hasten to inform you

that we had the sanction of the Bishop, the Archdeacon and the Vestry before we began the work and since the removal we have received a letter from the Archdeacon expressing his entire approval. We shall feel obliged if you will insert this in your next issue and so dissipate a misapprehension to which you have given rise.

We are sir, your obedient servants George Back and Alex R Chamberlin.

Services to mark the opening of the restored organ in its new position took place on Wednesday 2nd May 1866 and the occasion was described in the Chronicle;

It is now rather more than twelve months since the restoration of the organ in St Peter Mancroft church was first mooted at an Easter dinner, and the general favour with which the idea was received was soon evinced by many liberal contributions, not only from parishioners, but from a large number of individuals in the county and city, always ready to assist such desirable objects. A committee was at once formed, Mr C J Cubitt obligingly volunteering his services as secretary, and with the approval and zealous support of the incumbent, the Rev C Turner, and the churchwardens for the year, Mr George Back and Mr A Chamberlin, the work commenced in earnest by securing the services of Mr Hedgeland, the great organ builder, of London, and of Mr Phipson, on matters relating to the architectural delays. It was scarcely to be anticipated that in this, more than in any other scheme entailing many alterations, the views of its promoters should meet with no opposition, and in this instance the proposed removal of the organ from its position at the extreme west end of the

church, where a lofty gallery had hitherto accommodated both the instrument and the choir, was considered by some few individuals as anything but desirable. A general impression, however, prevailed that in its present restored condition the church was disfigured rather than otherwise by the old-fashioned gallery, and that the choir being transferred to the body of the church would lead to an improved system of congregational singing, and thus as we have stated, with but few dissentients, the tower arch was once more disclosed in all its noble proportions, to be restored also, we trust, in its turn, as soon as funds are forthcoming. That the organ will be heard with equal effect in its present position in the north transept, has already been proved most satisfactorily, the softest notes being distinctly audible in every part of the building. This organ was first erected in 1707, by Renatus Harris, and it is not therefore to be wondered at, that time should have had its usual deteriorating effects, or that modern improvements in mechanism were needed to render it thoroughly effective.- How well Mr Hedgeland has performed his work were amply shown at the opening services, on Wednesday last, and the parishioners may now congratulate themselves upon possessing an organ worthy of their noble church, and not surpassed in richness of tone and power by any other in the county. Of the appearance of the new gothic case and pipes we can scarcely speak in such glowing terms, the first being extremely meagre in execution, and the latter so coloured as to be effective neither by gas nor daylight. The organ, as now constituted may be technically described as follows:

Choir organ CC to G: open diapason, 8'; stopped diapason and clarabella, 8' tone; dulciana (tenor C) , 8'; viol di gamba (tenor C), 8'; stopped flute (metal), 4' tone; open flute (wood), 4; clarionet and bassoon, 8'.

Pedal organ CCC to F: Open diapason (wood), 16'; stopped diapason (wood) 16' tone; principal (wood), 8; Couplers: swell to great organ, choir to great organ, swell to choir organ, swell to pedals, choir to pedals, great organ to pedals.

Pipes: Great 896; choir 392; swell 560; pedal 90; total: 1938 Three composition pedals to great organ, two composition pedals to swell. Great organ CC to G; Double diapason (wood and metal), 16' tone; open diapason No 1, 8; open diapason No 2, 8; stopped diapason, 8; principal, 4; twelfth, 3; fifteenth, 2; larigot, 1 and a third; tierce, 1 and 3-5ths sesquialtera 3 ranks; mixture, 3 ranks; trumpet, 8' tone;

Swell organ CC to G: bourdon, 16' tone; open diapason, 8; stopped diapason, 8; principal, 4; fifteenth, 2; mixture, 2 ranks; cornepean, 8; oboe, 8; clarion, 4. The actual additions are - the pedal organ, the basses to all the old swell stops, and two new stops, consisting of the cornepean (large scale) and bourdon (16 feet tone). To the great organ is added a new metal open diapason throughout and double diapason, open and stopped, throughout, of 16 feet.

The choir organ of the old instrument was nearly all borrowed from the great organ, and in consequence the present choir organ is almost entirely new. The only exceptions are the old flute and clarionet. The mechanism, which is all new, is of a highly finished and beautiful character. The viol di gamba in the choir organ is by Mr Hedgeland and is of a remarkably

sweet tone. The cost of the work, exclusive of the oak case is £430.

The reporter of the event for the Mercury was not convinced by what he had heard.....

The effect of the organ in its present place is that of a giant imprisoned.... It is with no intention of disparagement to Mr Harcourt, the organist, we say that a player that has been for years confined to an imperfect instrument, such as the old organ at St Peter's was, more especially in the pedals, could be expected at once to develop all the varied resources which the organ now possesses, a removed and renewed by Mr Hedgeland. His organs, although new to Norwich, are well known in the Metropolis, and we think the committee would have done well, and the organ and its builder only justice, had they engaged some eminent player who was acquainted with the capabilities of its resources for the opening of this, in every way, undoubtedly, most splendid instrument..... his instrument was not heard on Wednesday in all its beauty, variety, and power, and that the effect of its real volume is also immensely lessened by the prison in which it is placed.

The old organ case was advertised in the press on 29th August 1866
St Peter's Mancroft organ case. For sale in good condition, the splendid carved oak case, together with the large gilt front pipes of the organ formerly standing in the church. Also the sound boards etc. The whole the work of the celebrated Renatus Harris. Apply to Mr Hedgeland organ manufactory, 117 Gower St, London WC.



Kris Thomsett (20) is the newly appointed organ scholar of Norwich Cathedral, a post he will hold for the next three years whilst completing a degree in music at the University of East Anglia. Prior to Coming to Norwich, Kris was Organ Scholar of Chelmsford Cathedral in Essex for his gap year. His role in Chelmsford, similar to that here, involved accompanying the daily services and regularly playing for the Cathedral Girls Choir.

Kris started the organ at the age of twelve, and at the age of fourteen was appointed organ scholar of All Saints Parish church in Maidstone (Kent). After being there for just over a year, he moved to become organ scholar of the King's School in Rochester where he accompanied the schools' services in the cathedral. Whilst in Rochester, Kris studied the organ with Roger Sayer. As well as playing the organ Kris enjoys singing and has sung counter-tenor in Rochester, Chelmsford and now Norwich Cathedrals.

I have some duplicate copies of "The Organ" published by Musical Opinion. Free to a good home. Here is the list:-No. 40 (Vol 10 April 1931); Nos 112; 153; 162 to 164; 166 to 167; 169 to 177; 181; 183 to 188; 190 (Vol 48 October 1968)

I am also looking for the following issues towards my own set, if there are any spare copies out there no longer required. I would be most grateful if there are.

Here is my list of missing numbers:- No. 3 (Vol. 1. January 1922); 5 to 24; 26 to 30; 32; 33; 35; 37; 41 to 48; 53 to 56; 61; 63 to 97; 122; 124 to 140; 143 to 147; 149 to 151; 156 to 159; 192; 193; 195 to 201; 203 (Vol. 51. January 1972) onwards.

Carey Moore 01953 452682

Payment in kind

After a hiatus of about two years I was goaded into composing recently by a commission from an English organist working in Sweden who has some connection with a wine merchant in Shrewsbury. A most appropriate way was found of dealing with the knotty problem of remuneration. Within a week of my completing the piece(s) there arrived at my door a case of very good wine and a week later a package of French cheeses courtesy of fromages.com. Visit their website and treat yourself. More commissions along these lines would be very welcome.

Lyme Regis Organ School

The Lyme Regis Organ School is holding its second Winter Workshop from 16th to 18th February 2012.

This residential event is aimed at organists of any age and level of attainment. Its theme will be *The Glories of French Organ Music* and the lead tutor will be Philip Scriven. There will be group workshops, individual teaching, demonstration and a full length organ recital. The cost, not including accommodation, will be £160, or £120 for those under eighteen. There is a wide range of accommodation available in the delightful coastal town of Lyme Regis.

For further information and a leaflet, please contact:

Dr Richard Godfrey: tel: 01297 445709,

email: rgodfrey78@hotmail.com

or Desmond Chaffey: tel 01305 250528,

email desmond.chaffey@btinternet.com

www.lymeregisorganschool.org

Organist required at Our Lady of Pity RC
Church Swaffham

Mass at 10.30 am on Sundays

One manual and pedals pipe organ

There is a choir of about eight in number
under the direction of a competent leader

who rehearse on Fridays at 4. 30 pm

Remuneration to be negotiated in
accordance with RSCM guidelines.

Contact Fr Michael Johnstone on 01760
721418 or by email

fr.mcjohnstone@tesco.net

Applicants do not need to be Roman
Catholics

Organist needed on Christmas Eve at South
Creake

Organ has one manual and pedals and the
music will consts of Merbecke setting with
hymns. Expenses will be met.

Contact Fr. Roger Arguile at
arguile@btinternet.com



**MERRY
CHRISTMAS!**

For your diary

Why not remove this sheet and keep it somewhere for easy reference

Forthcoming Association Events

Saturday 14th January, Holy Trinity Church, Essex St, Norwich at 7pm:

Quiz & Chips: Our traditional and ever popular opener for a new year returns with a new Quizmaster at the helm. Our President, Harry Macey has very kindly agreed to supply a goodly selection of brain-teasers. A suitable local establishment will provide the all important fish & chips.

Cost: £6 per head (includes drinks & condiments).

Please let Martin Cottam know by Saturday January 7th at the latest if you wish to have fish & chips.

Saturday 25th February, Church Rooms, Brooke at 2pm:

Desert Island Discs: The Precentor of Norwich Cathedral, the Reverend Canon Jeremy Haselock has very kindly agreed to be our latest castaway. Many of you will remember the very entertaining after-dinner speech he gave at one our President's Dinners a few years back and he will undoubtedly give good value again this time round. Ron Watson, as ever, will act as Grand Inquisitor.

Saturday 31st March, St. Michael's Church, Aylsham at 11.30am:

AGM, Buffet Lunch, and Recital: Following the successful format of recent years we shall start proceedings with the business meeting after which there will be a buffet lunch (Cost: £5 per head for NOA members and non-members). Our two youngest NOA Committee members, David Ballard and Matthew Bond will conclude proceedings by each giving a short recital on the church's 3 manual Norman & Beard organ (1911), combining their talents in an organ duet at the half-way point.

Please let Harry Macey (president@norfolkorganists.org.uk) know by Saturday 24th March at the latest if you require the buffet lunch.

Tuesday 10th-Friday 13th April:

Organ Tour to Groningen, Holland.

Saturday 21st July, Park Farm Hotel, Hethersett at 7.30pm:

President's Dinner; We are returning to Park Farm for our President's Dinner where our Guest of Honour and after-dinner speaker will be Carl Jackson, Organist of Her Majesty's Chapel Royal, Hampton Court. He will be speaking about the work of the Chapels Royal. Cost: £30 per head. Dress: Black Tie (by special request!).

Please don't hesitate to contact Martin Cottam (01603 703921 or martin@cottam.eclipse.co.uk) if you have any queries or require further details of any of our events.